

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5239

UNCLAS MEXICO 10485

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJ: ARREST & DETENTION: VISITS TO LECUMBERRI PRISON OF  
NOVEMBER 27 AND DECEMBER 4

1. ON NOVEMBER 26 AND DECEMBER 4 CONSULAR OFFICERS  
VISITED 61 OF THE 80 AMERICANS AT THE LECUMBERRI PRISON.  
THIS BRINGS TO 24 THE NUMBER OF VISITS TO LECUMBERRI THIS  
CALENDAR YEAR.

2. PRIOR TO INTERVIEWING THE PRISONERS THE VISITING  
CONSULAR OFFICERS HELD A LONG DISCUSSION OF PRISON  
CONDITIONS AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCES PREVIOUSLY  
REPORTED BY PRISONERS WITH GENERAL FRANCISCO ARCUATE  
FRANCO, THE DIRECTOR OF THE PRISON. COL. GIL CARDENAS,  
THE CHIEF OF SECURITY AT THE PRISON ALSO ATTENDED THE  
MEETING. THE CONSULAR OFFICERS SUGGESTED AND THE DIRECTOR  
WELCOMED THE SUGGESTION THAT A NEW SYSTEM OF INTERVIEWING  
PRISONERS WAS NEEDED WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A MORE PRIVATE  
AND MORE FAVORABLE SURROUNDINGS FOR THE INTERVIEWER.  
THIS CHANGE, IT WAS HOPED, WOULD ESTABLISH CONDITIONS FOR  
BETTER RAPPORT BETWEEN PRISONERS AND THE VISITING OFFICERS.  
THE GENERAL ALSO EXPLAINED THE REASON FOR A LACK OF WORKING  
COMMISSIONS AT THE PRISON AS WELL AS THE CORRECT PROCEDURE  
FOR OBTAINING COMMISSIONS WHICH APPLY TO REDUCTION IN  
SENTENCES.

2. EXCEPT FOR TWO, ALL THE INTERVIEWS WERE HELD IN A  
FRIENDLY AND CALM ATMOSPHERE. ALL OF THE PRISONERS LOOKED  
HEALTHY AND, AT LEAST OUTWARDLY, WELL-NOURISHED. IN GENERAL,  
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GRIEVANCES WERE LIMITED TO THE TYPE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES

FURNISHED AND THE LIMITED NUMBER OF WORKING COMMISSIONS AVAILABLE. SOME PRISONERS WANTED FANCY DENTAL WORK PERFORMED WHICH IS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE AT THE PRISON. EYE EXAMINATIONS HELD SECOND PLACE IN THIS TYPE OF GRIEVANCE. UPON LEAVING THE PRISON, THESE COMPLAINTS WERE REFERRED TO GENERAL ARCUATE WHO WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO EXPLAIN THAT TWO DOCTORS, ONE A GENERAL PRACTITIONER AND THE OTHER A DENTIST, MADE DAILY CALLS AT EACH DORMITORY. IN ADDITION TO THIS, HE SAID THAT TWO OPHTHALMOLOGISTS (ONE OF WHOM IS A RENOWNED EYE SURGEON) VISIT THE PRISON TWICE WEEKLY.

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